

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Final Office Action mailed October 7, 2003. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 42-44, and 47-58 were pending in this application. Claims 42-44, and 47-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). claims 54-58 were allowed. To expedite prosecution, Applicant has cancelled Claims 42-44 and 47-58 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 42, 43, 44, 47-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over G.B. 2 304 513 A (hereafter "G.B. '513) in view of "*The Uni-Knot*" and U.S. Patent 2,835,069 to A. J. Flye, Sr. (hereinafter "Flye, Sr."). Applicant respectfully submits that none of the references cited by the Examiner show or teach Applicant's invention as defined in Claims 42-44 and 47-58. Applicant further notes that the Examiner has provided no support for his statement "... the motivation to combine the references is in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art." Applicant plans to seek additional patent protection for his invention.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates Examiner's allowance of Claims 54-58.

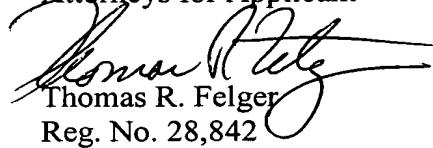
CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above.

Applicant believes there are no fees due, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Thomas R. Felger, Attorney for Applicant, at the Examiner's convenience at 512.322.2599.

Respectfully submitted,
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